

MEDIA IMPACT FUNDERS

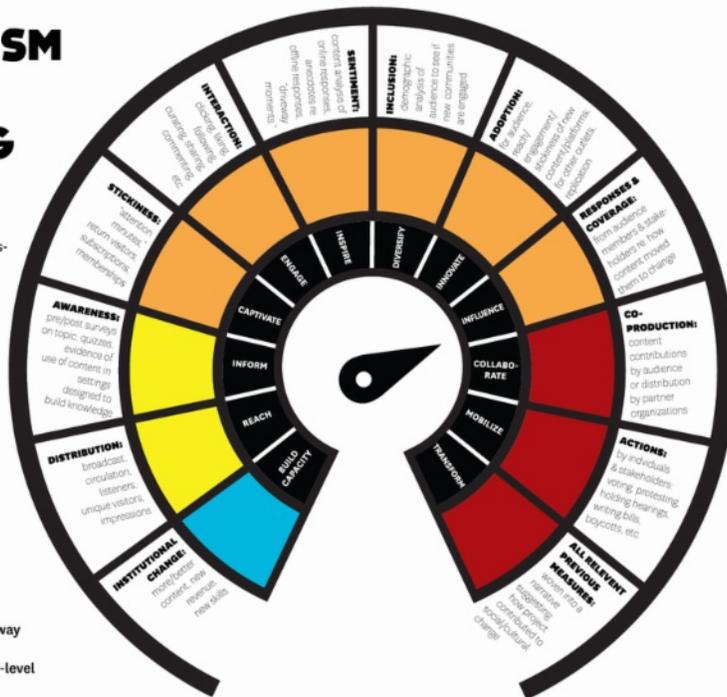


AIM Bulletin #17

How can funders work with newsrooms to understand impact?

THE JOURNALISM IMPACT PLANNING GAUGE

The methods that funders and newsrooms use to assess the impact of journalism projects depend on the goals that they define. Some goals require that evaluators pay attention to the newsroom's internal dynamics, others focus mainly on one-way dynamics of audience reach and responses, and still others take into account two-way or multi-level relationships that define what we call "story-vectors" between content, issues, stakeholders and institutions.



Increasingly, foundations are supporting journalism projects -- to bolster local and statehouse coverage, illuminate pressing social issues, or ensure that governments and corporations remain accountable. However, when it comes time to evaluate the outcomes of those investments, conflicts with fiercely independent newsrooms can arise.

As our January report, [*Funder Perspectives: Assessing Media Investments*](#) revealed, program officers and journalists need new language and fresh methods to navigate this shifting terrain. That's why Media Impact Funders has teamed up with the Media Impact Project at USC Annenberg's Norman Lear Center to produce a 2-in-1 guide: [*Impact Assessment for Nonprofit News Projects and Their Funders*](#).

[*Side one*](#), authored by MIF Research Director Jessica Clark, offers a conceptual overview of the issues that news funders are grappling with, competing definitions for what constitutes "impact" in the newsroom, and case studies of how grantees are tracking their process and progress.

[*Flip the booklet over*](#), and you'll find a nuts-and-bolts account from journalists Jason Alcorn and Lauren Fuhman about how to set up an evaluation system in a nonprofit newsroom. Drawing from their own experiences, as well as from conversations taking place across the industry, they offer step-by-step instructions, templates, and practical encouragement.

Insights from both sides of the guide are woven together in the centerfold with a new strategy tool -- the [*Journalism Impact Planning Gauge*](#), pictured above.

We hope this guide will be a valuable resource for stimulating both conversation and practice across the news funding field.

We'll be distributing hard copies -- plus an interactive version of the gauge -- at our forthcoming [*Media Impact Forum*](#) in Menlo Park. We'd be happy to provide additional

copies to interested funders or outlets, and are also seeking feedback on this framework and next steps.

Plus:

- In our [AIM Articles](#) section, learn about lessons gleaned from boundary-pushing public media experiments, ponder whether filmmakers should double as activists, and get tips on "how not to drown in numbers."
- Working with grantees on social media strategy? See our [AIM Research](#) section for new findings on internet and mobile usage trends, how millennials consume political news, methods for making content more sharable, and more.

*What kind of impact are we making on your work?
Send your questions or suggestions for coverage
to MIF Research Director [Jessica Clark](#)*



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